

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY PRE-EVENT SMALLPOX VACCINATION PLAN

Executive Summary (12/10/02)

Introduction

In response to the potential use of biological agents against civilians, the Commonwealth of Kentucky has committed to improving its preparedness against bioterrorism. Smallpox, a possible biological weapon, is an acute viral illness caused by the variola virus. Smallpox was globally eradicated in 1977, but concerns remain that stores of smallpox virus may exist in laboratories other than the two World Health Organization designated repositories (United States and Russia) and may be used by terrorists against us. A live-virus vaccine containing the vaccinia virus is available for the prevention of smallpox. Thus, following federal guidelines, Kentucky has formulated a pre-event vaccination plan to improve our preparedness to respond to an attack involving smallpox.

Vaccination Strategy

Because of potential side effects and reactions to the smallpox vaccine itself, the most prudent strategy to prepare against the possibility of smallpox entering our population is to vaccinate a limited number of critical responders so that we are prepared to respond appropriately if smallpox reappears. Three groups of individuals are designated for vaccination in the first wave of smallpox pre-event vaccination by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These include medical, disease investigation, and vaccination response teams who might be activated in the event of a smallpox outbreak. Other first responders (fire, police, paramedics, etc.) may be offered vaccination in a second wave of vaccination based on federal recommendations. This is the vaccination strategy that will be followed in Kentucky.

Organization and Management

The Kentucky Department for Public Health will organize and manage the smallpox pre-event vaccination program. To immunize health care and public health professionals efficiently but maintain security of vaccine and access to vaccination sites, collaboration with 10 – 12 local health departments (LHDs) is being established to vaccinate all first wave vaccinees in Kentucky. These Regional Vaccination Clinics (RVC) are located strategically across the Commonwealth so that no individual should have to travel more than 100 miles or over two hours to receive their immunization. Each RVC will handle scheduling of personnel from surrounding hospitals and LHDs to come for vaccination. Current plans call for over 5,000 health care and public health personnel to receive pre-event vaccination in the first wave.

Training and Education

A minimum of two screeners, two vaccinators and one clinic manager from each RVC will be brought to Frankfort for training using this plan. The selection of people to

be trained in Frankfort (and to subsequently train the balance of the RVC staff) will be determined by the host LHD. The Kentucky Cabinet for Health Service Training and Education Branch will prepare modules targeted to given instruction to vaccinators, screeners, and RVC data managers.

Data Management

The national effort to vaccinate public health and traditional first responders against smallpox has provided Kentucky a unique opportunity to gather critical contact data for use in other areas of bioterrorism preparedness, such as the Health Alert Network (HAN). To make full use of this information for HAN development, states must have access to the data beyond what is currently offered by CDC's Pre-Event Vaccination System (PVS). Therefore, in order to maximize the gains of this data collection activity the Commonwealth of Kentucky has elected to employ its own system.

To perform surveillance during pre- and post-event smallpox vaccination activities Kentucky intends to employ an existing public health registry tool known as the Electronic Public Health Records System (EPHRS). This system can be adapted to meet all certification criteria to qualify as a State Certified System for pre- and post-event vaccination tracking.

Communications

The Kentucky Cabinet for Health Services Communication Office and DPH will manage public information and message dissemination. Critical communications issues, include:

- (1) Aid public health officials and partner organizations in educating people recommended to get smallpox vaccine and in carrying out vaccinations;
- (2) Provide accurate and timely information to representatives of the media and general public on smallpox and smallpox vaccination efforts;
- (3) Reduce anxiety and educate the general public and other people who are not being offered the vaccine at this time, and
- (4) Communicate successfully with all groups of people how the vaccination effort will improve Kentucky's preparedness to respond to a release of smallpox.